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ABSTRACT

This practicum report describes the development of a student assessment survey to evaluate whether the liberal arts programs at Northeastern University (Massachusetts) were meeting the needs of the adult student population. Emphasis was on determining appropriate content and format design for a student assessment survey. A student outcomes survey was designed and was pilot tested with seven graduates of the liberal arts programs. Validation indicated the measure was useful in assessing the outcomes of graduates. The measure allowed respondents to evaluate the program's effectiveness in developing respondents' comprehension, accessibility, retrieval, and communication skills and appeared to be relevant to the educational experience and career choice of the adult student. It was also concluded that the mail survey was the best format. Appendices include names of individuals involved in the study, a list of survey objectives, and the survey instrument itself. (Contains 28 references.) (DB)

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DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT ASSESSMENT SURVEY FOR NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LIBERAL ARTS PROGRAM

Emergence of Higher Education

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A practicum report presented to Programs for Higher Education

in partial fulfillment for the degree of

Doctor of Education

Nova Southeastern University

August, 1997

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Abstract of a practicum report presented to Nova Southeastern University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT ASSESSMENT SURVEY FOR NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LIBERAL ARTS PROGRAM

by

William W. Bauser

August 20, 1997

The problem investigated was the development of a student assessment survey which was to measure whether the liberal arts programs were satisfactorily meeting the needs of the adult student population. The problem of this study was the lack of a student assessment survey tool which was to be used in an evaluation study of the liberal arts program. The research questions were, "What was the appropriate content for a student assessment survey?" and "What format design was best for a student assessment survey tool?"

Data gleaned from the literature review and input from the formative committee suggested that the criteria which was established for the survey content and format concentrate on a student outcomes survey. A student outcomes survey was established by utilizing the Academic Common Experience education criteria and was pilot tested on graduated liberal arts adult students. Upon completion of the pilot test, the validation of the pilot test revealed a useful instrument to assess the outcomes

of graduated liberal arts adult students. The results revealed that the appropriate content for a student assessment survey instrument was not only a questionnaire that respondents were able to demonstrate comprehension, accessibility, retrieval and communication but also was relevant to the educational experience and career choice of the adult student. The results also revealed that the best format was through the mail survey that was constructed with the scaling item format. It also allowed the respondents to decode the questions to meet their personal experience and encode the answers to the meaning of the questionnaire. The conclusions of this study demonstrated that the appropriate content for a student survey instrument was based upon the purpose and objectives of the survey research and the personal involvement of the participants, that the best format for a student assessment tool was based upon the budget, time, population accessibility and demands for information by the educational practitioners and that dialogue between stakeholders enabled the task to be completed. Consequently, it was recommended that this survey tool be used to evaluate the liberal arts program.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Background and Significance

Northeastern University has been incorporated since 1898 as a nonsectarian, private institution which today includes eight undergraduate colleges and nine graduate schools. The mission of these colleges' and schools' has been to identify and address the educational needs of a diverse community and student body in distinctive and useful ways (Northeastern University, University College Bulletin, 1996/1997, p. 276). The University is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc.

University College is one of the eight undergraduate colleges. University College was designed to provide improved status for the growing number of part-time students and programs in evening education leading to associate and bachelor degrees. University College develops courses and curriculum related to the subject matter offered in the other Northeastern Colleges, but adapted to the needs and interest of employed people who wish to undertake or complete a program of higher education during evening hours and weekends.

The purpose of the Liberal Arts Program is to facilitate students in making intelligent and realistic assessments of themselves and their chosen career by giving to the students a challenging educational experience and the ability to develop marketable knowledge and skills. University College offers bachelor of arts and bachelor of science degrees in art, economics, English, history, political science, psychology,

sociology-anthropology, and international politics, culture, and trade (Northeastern University, University College Bulletin, 1996/1997, p. 127). University College also offers a bachelor of liberal studies which encompasses the areas of communication and critical thinking, cultural heritage, science, research and quantitative methods and contemporary studies. The program enrolls approximately two-thousand adult students who are pursuing careers full-time and who want to complete a liberal arts degree.

Nature of the Problem

The liberal arts programs did not have a tool which assessed the programs quality; and, with an increasing adult population who are entering the liberal arts programs, a student assessment survey was a means of measuring whether the liberal arts programs were satisfactorily meeting the needs of the student population. Also, because of the increased competition to recruit from this student population, an instrument was needed to measure whether the liberal arts programs were satisfactorily meeting current adult student needs.

Consequently, the problem was to survey the opinions of students by a questionnaire which would utilize meaningful criteria as content and be presented in an appropriate format for an outcomes assessment evaluation of current adult student needs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to develop a student assessment survey tool. However, it was realized that an open-ended assessment of the liberal arts programs would not have given relevant data regarding the needs of adult students in the programs. Consequently, the purpose of this study became the

development of a criterion-referenced assessment survey instrument for the liberal arts programs.

Significance to the Institution

This criterion-referenced graduated student assessment survey allowed the administration to evaluate its liberal arts programs from one perspective. This survey was part of a total program evaluation which is to be conducted. As consumers of education, student opinion regarding the quality of teaching, programs, and services allowed the Liberal Arts Degree Programs to assess the needs of the adult students currently enrolled in its programs and as Hofmann (1994, p. 2), concludes, increases the probability of adult students being successful in the degree program.

However, as Palmer (1993) points out, "Open-ended assessments allow colleges to describe without judgment. They illuminate the educational enterprise without appraising institutional success" (p. 54). Yet, this approach does not specify what standards demonstrate student success whereby a criterion-referenced assessment does specify standards of student progress and the means to assure that those standards are being met. As Palmer (1993) states, "Criterion-referenced assessments avoid the problems of open - ended assessment by specifying standards of student academic progress and implementing procedures for determining whether those standards have been met" (p. 54). Consequently, a criterion-referenced survey instrument aided the institution in assessing how well the Liberal Arts Program has prepared the liberal arts graduated students in the skills of effective thinking, effective communication, information

literacy, life, management, career and interpersonal skills and abilities to learn about the natural, social and cultural worlds. The survey instrument also provided the ability to evaluate various perspectives of life which the Liberal Arts Program offers.

Relationship to the Seminar

This practicum report is directly related to the Emergence of Higher Education in America Seminar. The history of higher education is reflective of changing student demographics, and with this, student needs and wants. Consumerism today reflects a demand on education to meet the needs of the client, who in this case is the adult student. They want a voice in deciding what is meaningful and relevant to them personally. This, added to the pragmatic need for education to meet their expanding occupational needs, makes them an important part of the emerging educational team.

Relationship to Concentration

Schumacher & McMillan (1993) define research as "A systematic process of collecting and logically analyzing information (data) for some purpose" (p. 8), and Grizzle, Ligas & Rankin (1994) define evaluation as "The process of making judgments from data collected and analyzed. Evaluation aids in immediate decision-making; and assesses the merit or worth of a program, activity, practice, or product" (pp. 28-29). In the collection of data and the logical analyses of information, surveys (Schriesheim & Gardiner, p. 867 and Rea & Parker, p. 3) are a commonly used research methodology and are one of the primary means of data collection. In the process of evaluating the data gathered, the

basic method used (Tanur, J. M, 1994, p. B1, Miller, M. M, 1994, p. 1 and Boser, J. A., & Clark, S. B., 1995, p. 1) in making judgments about programs, practices, activities or products is the analyses of surveys. And as (Miller, 1994) points out, "Educational researchers utilize mail questionnaires since they are convenient and relatively inexpensive compared to interviews or ethnographic research" (p. 1). Consequently, the development of this questionnaire is an intregal component of this concentration.

Research Questions

There were two research questions for this study. First, "What is the appropriate content for a student assessment survey?" Second, "What format design is best for a student assessment survey tool?"

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this practicum, the following terms needed clarification.

Adult student. An adult student is an individual who has life experiences, who is pursuing a career full time or has part - time employment and who is attempting to enhance his or her educational experience.

Survey. A survey is a questionnaire which answers questions to solve problems, assess needs, and set goals to determine whether or not specific objectives have been met and to establish policies for future comparisons of the program.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This researcher was, at first, surprised to find that under the practicum or major applied research practicum literature resources that no literature sources for key words including survey research, questionnaire or questionnaires, response rate or response rates, survey development, survey design or survey format were to be located. However, after searching through other data bases, this researcher's need for sources became enhanced. This was of particular interest because (T. H. E. Journal, 1995, p. 52 and Grizzle, Ligas, & Rankin, 1994, p. 11) survey research and the practicum report process is an intregal component of the research methodology which students need to develop in order to apply the theoretical concepts we have learned. Consequently, this practicum report is concerned with the development of a student assessment survey tool, the criteria developed for the questionnaire and the content and format for the survey tool which will be used as the means of data collection for the evaluation of a program.

Survey Tool

Tanur (1994) informs us that "Our society increasingly relies on survey data for many of its most important decisions, yet many people cannot tell a reliable survey from a questionable one" (p. B1). This perception can be seen in what Shoales (1997) relates to us:

> I can see the value of a poll to politicians and journalists - it gives them something to blather about. But I'm otherwise puzzled by this uniquely American phenomenon: Do we really need to know what people like us are thinking before we make a decision to think for ourselves? Let me rephrase that: Do we need to know

> what specific numbers of people like us are thinking before we make a decision to think ourselves (p. 11).

Regardless of the flawed logic of this opinion, it is still the responsibility (Tanur, 1994, p. B1) of the survey researcher and educator to not only understand the effects of how questions are worded and of the refined sampling techniques but also to be wise consumers of survey results and to teach their students how to be wise users of survey information. Consequently, it is important to realize that surveys are a much utilized tool, yet, like any tool, if misused, then surveys can become dangerous instruments.

Surveys

Surveys (Terrell,1994, p. 101) look at the current status of something, or as Grizzle, Ligas, & Rankin, (1994) state, "Questionnaires and surveys are among the most used methods of data collection for research studies" (p. 36). However, both Rea & Parker (1992, p. 1) and Fink (1995, p. 1) broaden this perspective to include the reflection of attitudes, preferences, opinions and as a system to describe attitude and behavior of various stakeholders. Terrell (1994, p. 35) and Rea & Parker (1992, p. 3) tell us that there are four techniques used in data collection. These are: survey research, direct measurement, observation and documentary analysis. However, Rea & Parker (1992) tell us that:

> There is no better method to research than the sample survey process for determining, within a known level of accuracy, information about large populations and the survey process is particularly suited for the collection of data that can inform the researcher about research questions (p. 4).

And as Busche (1995) further relates regarding questionnaires,

"Pre-formatted, written set of questions to which the respondent records his or her answers usually within rather closely defined alternatives" (p. 1) is traditionally used to assess programs. Consequently, it is fair to say that a survey is a questionnaire which answers questions to solve problems, assess needs, and set goals to determine whether or not specific objectives have been met and to establish policies for future comparisons of the program.

Conducting Survey Research

In conducting survey research, it is important to follow particular steps to insure that the survey will be valid and reliable. However, to understand what one should do, it is important to recognize the steps to be undertaken. Schumacher & McMillan (1993, pp. 251-282) list seven steps for the conducting of survey research but Rea & Parker (1992, pp. 13-18) utilize eleven stages for the survey research process. Both Rea & Parker (1992, p. 13) and Schumacher & McMillan (1993, p. 251) agree that the first step in pursuing survey research is to define the purpose and objectives of the research. As Foddy (1993) relates:

> Explication of the purpose of each question and how resulting data will be used has an almost fiendish ability to force implicit assumptions out into the open and highlight any mismatches between the researcher's actual interests and the proposed questions (p. 33).

The researcher needs to realize that (Fink,1995, p. 2) the way the question is asked will determine the answer you receive. As Fink (1995) points out, "The selection and wording of questions are strongly influenced by the survey's context: its purposes, who asks the questions, how they are asked, who answers them, and the

characteristics of respondents and responses" (p 3). Consequently, before a researcher can write a question, he or she must completely understand the purposes and objectives of the study.

Along with clarifying the objectives and purpose of the survey instrument, the researcher needs to determine the format for collecting the data. This decision will be governed by the budget available for conducting the survey research plus the time allotted for the survey research. In this specific case, the mailed survey questionnaire was chosen. As Ahaem & Gentemann (1996) state, "Surveying alumni via mailed questionnaires is an integral component of most assessment and institutional effectiveness programs" (p. 2). In choosing this method of survey research, it was critical that all costs were estimated and that a workable time schedule was devised. This concern regarding survey costs is not new (Tanur, 1992, p. 4), however, this recognition of the costs of questionnaire development allows the researcher to understand the underlining cognitive process of asking and answering questions. Both Rea & Parker (1992, p. 13-14) and Schumacher & McMillan (1993, p. 281) use this process in the second stage of developing a questionnaire. However, Schumacher & McMillan (1993, p. 281) include the establishment of the target base in this stage where Rea & Parker (1992, p. 14) separate the establishment of an information base into a third stage.

At this stage of developing the survey instrument, Rea & Parker (1992, p. 14) recommend that it is necessary to gather information about the subject matter under investigation from interested parties and key individuals. This includes not only doing a literature search but also talking with the parties who

are directly involved with the program, product or service which is being researched.

Rea & Parker (1992, p. 15) tell us that stage four of developing a survey questionnaire is concerned with selecting the target population. Schumacher & McMillan (1993, p. 281) set this process in step two. The researcher must decide who is to be surveyed at this point. As Ahaem & Gentemann (1996) state, "At the beginning of each survey project, the survey researcher must decide whether to survey the full population or to select an appropriate random sample" (p. 6).

In the next stage, according to Rea & Parker (1992), "The researcher must attempt to select a sample that is an appropriate microcosm of the working population" (p. 15). The reasons for selecting the appropriate sample size are (Rea & Parker, 1992, p. 15 and Ahaem & Gentemann, 1996 p. 6): reducing costs by reducing copying and mailing charges, decreasing staff time involved in preparing and tracing the returns, increasing convenience, fuller perspective, manageability and studying a particular theme over a longer period of time.

Once the type of probabilistic sample (Terrell, 1994, p. 39) has been chosen, the next stage is to design the survey instrument. The researcher (Rea & Parker, 1992, p. 16) must devise a series of unbiased, well structured questions that will systematically obtain the information identified when the purpose and objectives of the survey study were implemented. The wording of the questions and the format will depend upon whether the researcher has chosen an interview, survey mailing or telephone format for the design of the survey. A choice needs to be made to

utilize fixed response questions, open ended or a combination of fixed or open ended questions. As Foddy (1993) points out:

> Two issues seem to differentiate the two formats. In the first place, respondents are more likely to endorse a particular option if it has been explicitly listed than they are if they have to spontaneously think of it for themselves. In the second place, it has been found that respondents often give very different types of answers to open questions than they do to congruent closed questions (p. 8).

Consequently, the questionnaire must be easily understood by the respondents and internally consistent which will aid in the response return rate. Also, the questionnaire must be designed so that meaningful data analysis can be completed.

To assure that the design of the survey questionnaire is valid, the researcher needs to take the next step of pre-testing the survey instrument. In the pre-testing process, the researcher (Rea & Parker, 1992, p. 17 and Schumacher & McMillan, 1993, pp. 240-250) needs to administer the pre-test survey just as it will be used in the actual study and allow the respondents to write comments regarding the questions and length of the survey instrument. This will permit the researcher to know whether the survey is too long and whether the questions are easily understood and internally consistent. The respondents responses will allow the researcher to fine tune the survey instrument, so that when the researcher implements the survey, he or she can be assured that the survey tool will render the best possible response rate and that the data collected will be meaningful. However, the pre-testing of the survey tool not only allows the researcher to fine tune the instrument, it also allows him or her to address concerns dealing with the respondents as volunteers. As Lillibridge & Beck (1995) state, "Volunteer bias in student-generated data may affect

validity" (p. 2). Legal and ethical concerns, in some cases, protect the student from being required to participate in survey research. Consequently, the researcher needs to rely upon the students as volunteers to supplement any database. This reliance upon student volunteers as respondents can create a possible biasing effect on the data collected by focusing upon those students who have responded to the questionnaire without considering those students who are nonrespondents to the questionnaire. Such issues as age, ethnicity, gender and education and intelligence can produce biasing effects. For example, (Lillibridge & Beck, 1995, p. 6) in many of the survey research studies reviewed, nonrespondents are more likely to be male than female. Yet, there is more that the pre-tested questionnaire can aid the researcher with than bias recognition. The researcher can increase his or her response rate (Boser & Clark, 1995, p. 9) by recognizing the need to implement the practice of issuing incentives, the type of postage being utilized for outgoing and return mailings, sponsorship, questionnaire length, personalized communication, and anonymity. The utilization of all of these pre-testing processes aids the researcher in enhancing the purpose and objectives of the survey research study.

Along with the pre-testing of the survey instrument, is the need to train interviewers with the face-to-face or telephone format if that method is being used. Interviewers (Rea & Parker, 1992, p. 17) should receive specific instructions on conducting their interviews and should be given guidelines for handling uncooperative respondents. It is the researcher's responsibility

to insure that both ethical and legal considerations are being maintained by the interviewers while they are conducting their interviews as well as recognizing the interviewers role in conducting the survey. As Tanur (1992) points out, "To acknowledge the interviewer's role and to equip him or her with means to fill that role more effectively might have a sufficient value with respect to the validity of the data to offset the costs of additional compensation and training" (p. 265).

Once the pre-testing procedure and/or the interviewer training has been completed, the next stage in the development of the questionnaire (Rea & Parker, 1992, p. 17) is the implementation of the survey. The researcher at this point must adhere to the established random sampling procedure which was selected during the design of the survey and assure that (Terrell, 1994, p. 27) ethical standards such as privacy, integrity and no physical or psychological harm is experienced by the respondents, legal considerations such as the Buckley Amendment and the National Research Act, and institutional cooperation such as up front training and consultation, respondents feelings and non-cooperation are maintained, recognized and adhered to. However, in the implementation of mailed questionnaires, it is the letter of transmittal which determines the response rate of the survey instrument. As Schumacher & McMillan (1993) relate in their step five of conducting survey research, "In the case of mailed questionnaires the nature of the cover letter, or letter of transmittal, is crucial in determining the percentage of subjects who return completed forms. The letter should be brief and should establish the credibility of the researcher and the study" (p.

281). The letter of transmittal should include (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993, pp. 281-282) the names and identifications of the researchers, the purpose and objectives of the study, the importance of the study to the respondent and the institution, a statement of confidentiality, a time limit to complete the survey, any endorsements, if this is seen to enhance the response rate, and to mention of how the respondent can obtain the results of the survey a request for cooperation and honesty and finally a thank you to the respondent for volunteering to complete the questionnaire. In relating the importance of the study to the respondent, the researcher should consider whether a social utility or sponsor appeal would enhance the response rate. As Miller (1994) relates, "A social utility appeal stresses the importance of response to the betterment of society whereas a sponsor appeal emphasizes importance in aiding the sender" (pp. 1-2). The emphases that the researcher should place here on the implementation of the survey and transmittal letter is upon the receiving of a high response return rate.

Once the initial implementation of the survey has been accomplished, the researcher needs to have a follow-up procedure in place and have a process in place to handle those respondents who do not complete the questionnaire. As Schumacher & McMillan (1993) point out:

> After a period of from two to four weeks it is a good idea to send follow-up letters to the subjects who have not responded. The follow-up letter should contain another questionnaire, a stamped return-addressed envelop, and a cover letter that again stresses the importance of the study and the importance of the subject's contribution (p. 282).

If other mailings are needed to enhance the return rate, then the

use of post cards or another full mailing can be utilized if this cost is not beyond the established budget. However, knowing who has returned the questionnaire can be a problem for the researcher particularly if anonymity has been assured. Two techniques can be utilized (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993, p. 282) by the researcher to enhance the response rate. Either the researcher can mail the survey to everyone again or he or she can use a code on the questionnaire without the knowledge of the respondents in order to identify the respondents. This code should be clear, distinct and simple so that the matching process does not become time consuming.

Yet, even if the researcher has taken the appropriate measures such as repeated contact with the respondents, monetary and nonmonetary incentives, postage usage, cover letter appeals and length of the survey instrument to enhance the response rate return, nonresponse error can still occur. As Braverman (1996) relates, "Nonresponse errors occur when individuals selected from the frame are not ultimately represented in the data set because they refuse to participate, cannot be reached, or are unable to respond" (p. 19). It has already been mentioned how such a nonresponse response can bias the survey research study. Yet, there are two adjusting measures which the researcher can take to attempt to control the bias of nonrespondents. Again, as Braverman (1996) points out:

> The first assumes that nonparticipants are similar to late responders and, in fact, fall at the end of a 'continuum of resistance'; thus, estimates of nonresponse bias are derived from the data collected from late responders. The second hypothesis assumes that there are distinct categories of nonparticipants, such as refuses and hard-to-contact individuals; estimates for refuses are derived from the number of

> temporary refuses (those who finally did participate), and estimates for the hard to contact are derived from participants who were reached only after several callback attempts (p. 20).

However, the researcher should keep in mind that neither of the weighted estimation measures can completely provide a suitable estimate of bias in data being collected with the questionnaire.

Once the questionnaire is being returned, the researcher must be ready to collect the data and input the data into the computer for data processing. As Schumacher & McMillan (1993) state, "It is almost impossible to interpret data unless one organizes them. In quantitative research, the data are organized before data collection in the form of a questionnaire or a standardized instrument" (p. 486). This means that the questionnaire had to be designed so that the responses could be entered into a computer program for statistical analysis. Out of this data analysis will develop the data interpretation. This final stage in questionnaire development (Rea & Parker,1992, p. 18) will result in the final report where the recorded data must be summarized, placed in tabular form and prepared for statistical analysis that will shed light on the purpose and objectives of the survey research study. This is accomplished by utilizing statistical significant tests such as, measures of central tendency, determinations of variability and correlations among variables. Yet, this data analysis and data interpretation could not be accomplished unless the questionnaire was formatted so that the data was meaningful.

Questionnaire Format

Schumacher & McMillan (1993) tell us that, "A questionnaire is relatively economical, has standardized questions, can ensure

anonymity, and questions can be written for specific purposes" (p. 238) and Boser & Clark (1995) relate that, "...The predominant sample survey method used in this country is the mail survey" (p. 1). Since a questionnaire is one means of collecting information, a researcher should assure himself or herself that (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993, p. 239) within the purpose of the survey research study that other information gathering techniques would not satisfy the objectives of the study. Further, Schumacher & McMillan (1993) tells that, "Researchers should give much thought to justification whenever they develop new questionnaires" (p. 239) particularly where the use of existing questionnaires regarding the study could be used to save time, money and assure reliability and validity.

However, Northeastern University had received funding from the U.S. Department of Education to establish a curriculum for undergraduates based upon (Northeastern University, September 1995, p. 1) a model which integrates what traditionally is called general education into specialization within a major field. After an extensive literature search and investigation into alternative survey techniques, a pre-existing questionnaire could not be located which expressed the purpose and objectives of the study. Consequently, a local questionnaire had to be developed to meet the purposes and objectives of the survey research study.

Once the researcher has justified the usage of a questionnaire as the means of gathering information, the researcher should define the objectives of the study. As Schumacher & McMillan point out, "By defining objectives the researcher is specifying the information that is needed, and an

inability to do this suggests that the investigator does not understand the research problem completely" (p. 240). In development of this study the objectives became, to determine whether the Liberal Arts Program produces a common educational experience, to determine that the Liberal Arts Program provided the skills of effective thinking, effective communication and informational literacy in the career choices of the graduated student, to determine that the Liberal Arts Program provided the knowledge competencies in the students selected degree program which was related to the career choices of the graduated student, to determine that the Liberal Arts Program provided the proficiencies to carry out job tasks and responsibilities in the graduated students career choice and to determine that the Liberal Arts Program provided the fulfillment of roles as good and responsible citizens.

Once the objectives have been defined and that the decision to write a local survey has been established, the researcher can begin to write the questions of the questionnaire. As Schumacher & McMillan state:

> It is best to write the items by objective and to be aware of the way the results will be analyzed once the data are collected. There are two general considerations in writing the items: comply with rules for writing most types of items, and decide which item format is best (p. 240).

For the researcher needs to recognize that (Tanur, 1992, pp. 22-23) the participants in the survey research do so purposefully and that their participation in the survey research has a mutually accepted purpose or common purpose which is guided by a cooperative principle. Yet, this cooperative principle of voluntarily responding does change from moment to moment which

can cause the questionnaire to develop errors (Foddy, 1993, p. 4) in gathering data because respondents fail to understand questions as intended; demonstrate a lack of effort, or interest; be willing to admit to certain attitudes or behaviours; maintain memory or comprehension process; or, perceive the question other than as a threat to him or her. Consequently, the researcher should follow guidelines in writing questionnaire questions such as: (Busche, 1995, p. 1; Fink, 1995, pp. 18-28; Foddy, 1993, p. 10; Schumacher & McMillan, 1993, pp. 240-249 and Tanur, 1992, pp. 23-24) clarity of items, the use of single ideas or concepts, respondent competency, question relevance, simplicity, the avoidance of negative items, non-loaded questions or biased questions, having the questions reviewed by experts and pre-testing the questions with potential participants. If the researcher does not follow such guidelines as the above, then the collected data's reliability and validity will be subject to errors (Braverman, 1996, pp. 19-26) such as: errors of nonobservation and errors of observation. Consequently, as Schumacher & McMillan (1993) state:

> The general layout and organization of the questionnaire is very important. If it appears to be carelessly done or confusing, respondents are likely to set it aside and never respond. A well-done format and appearance provides a favorable first impression and will result in cooperation and serious, conscientious responses (p. 242),

Once the layout and organization of the questionnaire has been accomplished, the researcher needs to provide a response framework. The researcher (Foddy, 1993, pp. 126-152) encodes the questions, the respondent decodes the question and encodes his or her answer depending upon the item framework being employed and the researcher decodes the answers. Shumacher & McMillan (1993)

point out that:

> The first consideration is to decide whether the item will have a closed form, in which the subject chooses between predetermined responses, or an open form, in which the subjects write in any response they want. The choice of form to use depends on the objective of the item and the advantages and disadvantages of each type (p. 243).

Consequently, the researcher needs to evaluate the assumptions which underlie each format. For example, one of the assumptions of open questions is that they do not suggest answers to respondents. As Foddy (1993) points out, "Perhaps the most persistent criticism of closed questions is that pre-set response options are likely to cause respondents to give answers they would not give if they had to provide them for themselves" (p. 129). However, in using open questions on the one hand, the practice of probing which interviewers engage in to clarify the respondents answers actually produce effects which either record results which the interviewer expects to hear rather than what is actually reported and on the other hand, the practice of probing actually turns open questions into closed questions restricting the response the respondent is actually giving. Hence, this assumption is not necessarily supported by experience and is empirically not necessarily valid.

Yet, while the above perspective appears that the closed question format can provide stronger data results, this is not necessarily the case. For example, one of the assumptions which underlie the use of closed questions is (Foddy, 1993, p. 140) because all respondents answer the question in the same way, the answers can be meaningfully compared. However, even though the researcher attempts to have the respondents both define key words

in the same manner and adopt the same perspective, this might not be accomplished because respondents seldom interpret questions literally. As Foddy (1993) points out, "They adopt a perspective that includes, among other things, assumptions about the sort of information the researcher 'really' wants. If different respondents give different meanings to key concepts and adopt different perspectives, they will, in fact, be answering different questions" (p. 140). Consequently, there is no empirical proof that closed questions can guarantee the validity and reliability of the collected data.

What can be concluded from the above perspectives? While it appears that both closed or open questions (Foddy, 1993, p. 51; Schumacher & McMillan, 1993, p. 243 and Tanur, 1992, p. 4) give different responses depending on the purpose of the survey research, it would be imprudent to argue that open questions necessarily provide more valid results than closed questions and it would be likewise imprudent to argue that closed questions are more efficient than open questions. As Schumacher & McMillan (1993) point out, "If the purpose of the research is to generate specific individual responses, the open-ended format is best; if the purpose is to provide more general group responses, the closed form is best"(p. 244). Alternatively, if one wanted to argue that the above is not sufficient evidence for selecting either one of the formats and that we can still utilize both formats (Tanur, 1992, pp. 55-60) in questionnaire development, the researcher needs to realize that the responses to the questions may not be similar and that the cost of coding each question will be more. As Tanur (1992) relates, "For each target question to be

investigated, however, a different set of closed questions would be required, motivated by relevant theories of alternative meanings of the target question" (p. 58). Again, one of the factors which the researcher has to pay attention to is the reliability of the data being generated.

Along with the choice of closed or open question format, the researcher needs to select an item scale or a combination of item scales as a means of having the respondents encode their data selections. The items at the researcher's disposal are: scaling, ranking and checklisting. The selection of the encoding item depends upon how the researcher is utilizing the data in the survey study. If for example, the researcher is seeking accurate information about beliefs or opinions, he or she can use a scaled format. As Schumacher & McMillan (1993) point out:

> A scale is a series of gradations, levels, or values that describes various degrees of something. Scales are used extensively in questionnaires because they allow fairly accurate assessments of beliefs or opinions. This is because many of our beliefs and opinions are thought of in terms of gradations (p, 244).

The primary examples of this item format are the Likert-type scales and the Semantic Differential scale. The strengths of this item allow the respondent to decisively record his or her decisions. It is important that the gradations be as specific as possible and at all possible there should be more than five gradations to select from for the respondents. Also, the placing of the 'no opinion' gradation is important regarding the decoding of data. If this gradation is placed in the middle of the choices, then interpretation is difficult if the gradations are not specific and if this choice is placed at the end of the gradations, then the choice should not be of a neutral response

and should clearly express a no opinion selection by the respondent.

However, if the researcher is looking for information which differentiates more between the gradations, he or she should select a ranking item. This item will allow the researcher to discover the respondents choice of importance regarding the data. Finally, if the researcher is just looking for options of selection, he or she can use the checklist item. The researcher needs to keep in mind that clarity is key for respondents to decode the question. As Shumacher & McMillan (1993) point out, "The clearest approach is to write the item on one line and to place the response categories below, not next to, the item. It is also advisable to use boxes, brackets, or parentheses rather than a line to indicate where to place the check mark" (p. 248).

Yet, the issue for a researcher is not which item format renders the most valid responses but whether the content is relevant for the respondents to answer the questions of the survey instrument. As Foody (1993) states, "The central issue is not which format produces the most valid responses but whether or not respondents know what kinds of answers they should give" (p. 152).

Questionnaire Content

The writing of a survey, for many, might seem a simple task. At least, all that needs to be done is to write clearly defined questions regarding the purpose of the survey research to receive from the respondents their opinions on the information that is being surveyed. As Pinsonneault & Kraemer (1993) point out regarding one of the characteristics of surveys used for research purposes, "Second, the main way of collecting information is by

asking people structured and predefined questions. Their answers, which might refer to themselves or to some other unit of analysis, constitute the data to be analyzed" (pp. 77-78). Traditionally, the researcher assumes that the respondent has access to the answers of the questions of the questionnaire and that all the respondent needs to do is to understand the straightforward content questions to respond. As Mason (1996) relates, "The traditional model of how a respondent provides an answer is termed the accessibility hypothesis. This approach views responses to questions as a process in which, after interpreting the question, a respondent searches a mental file system to seek the correct answer" (p.82). Yet, in doing surveys in student outcomes assessment, the researcher assumes that the respondent has a standardized cognitive domain whereby the meaning of each question is understood in the same way by each respondent.

However, the researcher needs to realize that no two respondents are numerically identical and that the cognitive steps (Mason, 1996, p. 86) that each respondent takes in in providing valid and reliable data are: comprehension, accessibility, retrieval and communication. It should be noted by the researcher that these cognitive steps which the respondent performs are complex mental tasks which the traditional questionnaire can not solicit. As Mason (1996) states:

> It is important to note that the traditional accessibility model of response delivery on a standardized questionnaire is limited. Respondents perform complex mental tasks to answer even simple questions. From this perspective, the context of questions, providing clues and cues and other mental prompts are essential features of the design of a questionnaire. This view is juxtaposed with common

> practice, in which questionnaires need to amass facts within time constraints and every question must contribute to substantive issues (p. 86).

Even though in the traditional mail survey the face-to-face interaction between the researcher and the respondent is eliminated; there is still a context within which the respondent is volunteering his or her responses. For the researcher to assume that the format of the survey will control the (Mason,1996, p. 86; Foddy,1993, p. 7 and Tanur,1992, p. 4) responses of the survey participants, is to misunderstand the interaction the respondents have in encoding their responses to the questions. Each question of the survey tool creates in the respondent certain feelings or ideas which will cause cognitive dissonance or tensions in the respondents interpretations of the questions. And, as Shultz & Lepper (1996) point out, "Any two cognitions are dissonant when, considered by themselves, one of them follows from the obverse of the other" (p. 219). This is the case, because the respondent is utilizing a value-based approach to encode responses in a strategic and judgmental process before he answers the questionnaire. As Mason (1996) relates:

> From this perspective, questionnaire development confronts the respondent's value system; questions may be used, not so much to obtain information directly, but to create a context in which respondents are encouraged to reveal their true attitudes. According to this view, the underpinning of what we decide is good (or acceptable) is based on our concepts of 'rationality' (p. 82).

However, what the researcher needs to recognize is that the respondents are not utilizing deductive reasoning in making their choices of answers but are using inductive reasoning processes in their decision making. Consequently, when a researcher is

decoding the responses of the respondent, he or she needs to realize that (Mason, 1996, pp. 87-91) for the information being collected to be reliable and valid the researcher needs to realize that the participants are framing their choices by their subjective evaluation of the purpose of the survey research.

Hence, the appropriate content that should be utilized for a student assessment questionnaire is not just that the participants have an understanding of the question intent, an ability or willingness to use the required information, a capacity to answer the questions and an ability to translate his choices into the categories provided in the questionnaire, but also provide a means whereby the participants can utilize their personal experiences in their decision process. By doing this, the researcher can be assured that the data being collected is less biased and more reliable and valid.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

Methodology

The development problem-solving methodology was utilized in this report to establish a procedure whereby the evaluation of Northeastern University's University College's Liberal Arts Program could be conducted as an outcomes assessment by its graduated students. The two research questions for this development study were:

1. What is the appropriate content for a student assessment survey?
2. What format design is best for a student assessment survey tool?

Procedures

Nine procedures were used to complete this practicum report. First, a comprehensive review of the literature was conducted. This review included a comprehensive review of the methods of the content and design of survey development and to identify factors which determined student satisfaction with educational programs. The initial focus of identifying factors which determined student satisfaction with educational programs was narrowed to identifying factors which graduated students of the Liberal Arts Program considered essential in their educational experience and career choice.

Second, criteria was established for the survey content and format. The criteria was based on the information gleaned from the literature review and input from the formative committee. The appropriate content for this survey was decided upon by the

consideration of the curriculum in place and the model which University College employs. Consequently, the appropriate content for a student assessment tool depends on the purpose and objectives of the survey research. It was acknowledged through the review of the literature that the appropriate format for data decoding in a student assessment or alumni assessment of a program was by the mail survey. The item format chosen for this survey instrument was scaling where a Likert scale model was used. It was decided that the gradations needed to be decisive with an option for the respondents to reconsider their choices. Under ideal conditions, the best format for a student assessment survey tool would first consider a format of ranking the value judgments of the population being studied and then using these results in a scaling format. Yet, ideal conditions are not always available in applied situations. Such conditions as budget, time and local idealism do not permit an ideal approach. Consequently, the best format for a student assessment survey tool is the one that allows budget, time and local contextual conditions to be applied. The formative committee consisted of a faculty member, a student, and a member of the admissions office. The formative committee reviewed the list of criteria and validated the criteria. The Associate Dean of Academic Programs, the Associate Dean and Director of Special Programs and the Assistant Dean, Director Liberal Arts and Criminal Justice and Security Programs formed the summative committee which validated the criteria. A complete listing of the participants on the formative and summative committees and reasons for their selection is included in

appendixes A and B of this practicum report. The criteria for their selection are also include in the appendix.

Third, the formative committee provided input on the issues and practical requirements for the questionnaire, reviewed drafts and provided feedback during the developing stages. The formative committee met twice (in January and in February of 1996) with each meeting lasting one hour. Feedback from the formative panel was collected on a form which helped to document the review process and aided in the reporting of results.

Fourth, two sample evaluation tools for student assessment were secured. The first evaluation tool that was secured was the surveys which Professor Fred Wiseman conducted for University College. Even though his student satisfaction surveys were not the direct focus of the Liberal Arts Program evaluation, his presentation of objectives, format and data presentation were examples which aided in the development of this survey instrument. The second sample evaluation tool that was secured was John Poirier's practicum report entitled "Evaluation of a Master of Science Degree Program in Training and Development at Lesley College." Mr. Poirier's evaluation practicum report gave insight into how an evaluation survey tool needs to appear if it is to be useful. His item format was initially utilized in the development of this evaluation tool.

Fifth, the draft of the student survey tool was written. However, it was not reviewed by the formative committee because the formative committee had disbanded. It was reviewed by the member of the admissions office and revised several times.

Sixth, a pilot test of the instrument was conducted. The

sample population consisted of ten adult students. This pilot test provided feedback on the survey's clarity and ease of use.

Seventh, the pilot test results were not submitted to the formative committee for validation of the survey content and format and any final revisions. The reason why the pilot test was not submitted to the formative committee for validation of the content and format was that the formative committee had disbanded and was not available for feedback.

Eighth, the draft was reviewed by the summative committee by mail in the month of February of 1997 using the criteria previously established. Feedback from the summative panel was collected on a form to help document the review process and aided in the reporting of results.

Ninth, there were no revisions that were deemed necessary by the summative committee. The final copy of the completed survey is to be submitted to the Dean of University College. A copy of the product is included in the appendix of this practicum report.

Assumptions

For this practicum, it was assumed that the literature review was relevant and provided needed information regarding survey development. It was also assumed that members of the formative committee had the knowledge and experience to guide the development of this project. It was assumed that the summative committee's evaluation of the content and format was valid.

Limitations

This product was limited in that it was specific to the needs of Northeastern University's University College and therefore it was unabled to be generalized to other universities or colleges.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

There were two research questions used to develop the contents of this practicum report. The questions are:

1. What is the appropriate content for a student assessment survey tool?
2. What format design is best for a student assessment survey tool?

Nine procedures were followed to answer these research questions. Initially, a comprehensive review of the literature was conducted to review the methods of the content and design of survey development and to identify factors which determine student satisfaction with educational programs. This review of related literature revealed that in acquiring the appropriate content and format for this student assessment project, that the content of the questionnaire should be demonstrative by the respondents ability to not only comprehend, access, retrieve and communicate but also be relevant to the educational experience and career choice of the adult student. Again, the literature review revealed that the best format for the survey tool was the mailed survey which was constructed with the scaling item format which allowed the respondents to decode the questions to meet their personal experiences and encode the answers to the meaning of the questionnaire.

Second, criteria was established by gleaning information from the literature review and the results of the development of the criteria can be reviewed in appendix C. Also, the formative committee was established and met for two meetings in January and

February of 1996 and the summative committee was organized. Appendixes A and B entail a complete listing of the participants on the formative and summative committees and reasons for their selection.

Third, even though the formative committee met for two non-productive meetings, the formative committee was disbanded because the faculty member was going to be unavailable and the student was no longer going to be attending the university. During this period, the questionnaires content, analysis, bibliography, cover letter mechanism, objectives and population were reviewed by internal and external experts.

Fourth, the work of Mr. James Poirier (1995) and of Dr. Fred Wiseman (1993) was secured for the purpose of gathering information for the creation of the evaluation tool. The information which these works provided gave substantive information into the content and design of the survey tool.

Fifth, the questionnaire was written and reviewed by the Assistant Dean of Liberal Arts and Criminal Justice Programs. The questionnaire had no revisions in content or in format and was subsequently pilot tested.

Sixth, a pilot test of the instrument was conducted. Ten adult graduated students of the Liberal Arts Program were submitted the questionnaire to establish its clarity and ease of use.

Seventh, after three mailings and a seventy percent return rate, the Assistant Dean of the Liberal Arts and Criminal Justice Programs found that the content and format valid and that the only revision that was made to the instrument was the addition of a

major concentration to the Liberal Arts classification of degrees offered to its adult students.

Eighth, the draft of the questionnaire was submitted to the summative committee for validation purposes using the criteria previously established. The summative committee found that no revisions were deemed necessary.

Ninth, The final copy of the completed survey was presented to the Dean of University College and is currently being used in an evaluation study. A copy of the product is included in appendix D of this practicum report.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to develop a student assessment survey tool and to include in the report criteria for questionnaire development, as well as content and format specific for the tool.

The first research question asked: What is the appropriate content for a student assessment survey?

The development of the appropriate content for a student assessment survey not only needs to deal with needs of a particular segment of the college or university being assessed, but the researcher needs to realize that he or she is functioning within the guidelines of the mission statement of the college or university he or she is studying. Further, the researcher's work product is very much part of an university's or college's self-study process. Consequently, the researcher needs to realize that the content he or she is working on refers to the institution's autonomy and essentially the institution's accreditation. What this confirms is that student assessment is an applied measurement and as such is an "assessment in the context of practice is highly dependent on the local and particular" (Tittle, 1992, p. 3). Hence, what the researcher needs to understand to develop an appropriate content base is not only the decoding of the needs of the students but what this information means to the university or college he or she is assessing. This is interesting in light that there is little information available on the meaning and use of

external assessments for students and teachers so that they can understand the importance of assessment in their performance activities.

The second research question asked: "What format design is best for a student assessment survey tool?" In the first place, what the researcher needs to take into consideration is his or her budget, time, availability of the student population and the demands for the need for information by the institution. If there are no constraints on any one of these situations then a researcher can utilize a multiple approach as the best format for a student assessment survey tool. For example, the researcher can utilize a ranking telephone process to find out the value system of the respondents. Once he or she has accomplished this, he or she can utilize this information in a scaling item format. However, as the literature review related, the mailing survey questionnaire is the most used format in student assessment surveys. This is because there are usually constraints on the researcher's budget, time, availability to students and the need for information by the institution. Yet, the choosing of a particular format does not guarantee that the meaning of the information will be valid and reliable. What the research needs to take into consideration are the theories of measurement and their use. This is not as easy as it seems, because not all parties may understand the applied implications of the theories and the meaning of their decodings. This is why we have assumptions and limitations in our proposals.

The task of a researcher and evaluator is to develop and measure assessments. Yet, there has been historically an

independence between researchers and evaluators and the educational practitioner. Traditionally, there is no clear definition of the role of the researcher and evaluator in developing tests and measurements for assessment activities. Yet, the educational practitioner has been defined as support for assessment procedures. As such, they offer judgments on the assessment procedures. Further, students are considered only as response providers. Yet, this traditional perspective does not consider that research and evaluation is an applied function.

There should be no surprise that there is traditionally a built in antagonism between the researcher and evaluator and the educational practitioner. This becomes manifested when the researcher attempts to practice his or her concentration in the work setting, particularly where the educational practitioner considers that the work of the researcher could violate the autonomy of the institution.

There should be no question that autonomy is an essential concept in educational practice. Yet, in their pursuit of educational excellence, educational practitioners need to realize that assessment is not an elenches but a dialogue between the stakeholders of the educational process.

Conclusions

The results of this study led to several conclusions:

1. The appropriate content for a student assessment survey tool is based upon the purpose and objectives of the survey research and the personal involvement of the participants.

2. The best format for a student assessment tool is based upon the budget, time, population accessibility and demands for

information by the educational practitioners.

3. Dialogue between stakeholders can enable a task to become completed.

Implications

The following implications were made as a result of this report:

1. Administration will have a tool to evaluate its Liberal Arts Program

2. Administration can improve its Liberal Arts Program to meet the needs of its adult students in its Liberal Arts Program.

3. Awareness of the relationship between researchers and evaluators and educational practitioners is important for the autonomy of the institution

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made as a result of this report:

1. University College should pursue the evaluation of its Liberal Arts Program.

2. University College should pursue further studies of its academic programs.

3. Further study of the working relationship between educational practitioners and research and evaluators needs to be pursued.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A

NAMES OF THE INDIVIDUALS WHO COMPOSED THE FORMATIVE COMMITTEE AND REASONS FOR THEIR INCLUSION

Dr. Ave M. Costello: Dr. Costello is Director of Student Support Services. Her expertise into the needs of the adult student was important in framing and in writing the questions for the survey instrument.

Mrs. Carol Fulton: Mrs Fulton is a student advisor with University College. Her awareness of the Colleges programs and of the students problems was important in the construction of the survey tool.

Ms Norma Moulton: Ms Moulton was a History major and was an example of the adult student who had life experiences and who was working part-time while pursuing he bachelors degree.

Appendix B

NAMES OF INDIVIDUALS WHO COMPOSED THE SUMMATIVE COMMITTEE AND REASONS FOR THEIR INCLUSION

Mrs. Judith Stoessel: Mrs. Stoessel is Associate Dean of Academic Programs for University College. Here responsibility is the design and implementation of the academic curriculum.

Mrs. Rose A. Doherty: Mrs Doherty is the Assistant Dean, Director of Liberal Arts and Criminal Justice and Security Programs. She is responsible for the implementation of these programs.

Dr. Arlene T. Greenstein: Dr. Greenstein is the Associate Dean and Director of Special Programs. Her responsibility is oversight and development of programs that are not directly related to the academic programs.

Appendix C

CRITERIA

Survey Objectives

1. To determine whether the Liberal Arts Program produces a common educational experience.

2. To determine that the Liberal Arts Program provided the skills of effective thinking, effective communication and informational literacy in the career choices of the graduated student.

3. To determine that the Liberal Arts Program provided the knowledge competencies in the students selected degree program which was related to the career choices of the graduated student.

4. To determine that the Liberal Arts Program provided the proficiencies to carry out job tasks and responsibilities in the graduated students career choice.

5. To determine that the Liberal Arts Program provided the fulfillment of roles as good and responsible citizens.

Appendix D

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

SURVEY OF GRADUATED STUDENTS OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE'S LIBERAL ARTS PROGRAM

Please indicate with a check mark in the appropriate column your reaction to the following statements.

Liberal Arts Program	(1) Strongly Agree	(2) Agree	(3) No Opinion	(4) Disagree	(5) Strongly Disagree
University College Liberal Arts Program provided to you the following:					
Skills					
Effective Thinking					
• The ability to identify a thesis, the evidence used to support it and the validity of the conclusions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to comprehend and apply objective and subjective methodologies	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to organize and advance logical, coherent arguments	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to evaluate information of many types from a variety of sources	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to question the construction of knowledge, challenge assumptions and conclusions and propose alternative hypotheses	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to understand and employ a variety of thinking strategies including intuition	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

PLEASE TURN THE PAGE OVER

Please indicate with a check mark in the appropriate column your reaction to the following statements.

Liberal Arts Program	(1) Strongly Agree	(2) Agree	(3) No Opinion	(4) Disagree	(5) Strongly Disagree
Effective Communication					
• The ability to express ideas and convey meaning clearly, concisely and imaginatively	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to construct a convincing persuasive thesis	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to employ proper, rhetorically effective grammar, syntax, spelling and punctuation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to use appropriate gestures and level of language	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to create and deliver compelling and attractive presentations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Information Literacy					
• The ability to understand the role of information and information technology in specific disciplines and in modern society	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to use competently the tools appropriate to your major field.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to identify extract, organize, prioritize and assess relevant information from a variety of sources	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to employ information and information technology ethically and in the service of society	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

PLEASE GO TO THE NEXT PAGE

Please indicate with a check mark in the appropriate column your reaction to the following statements.

Liberal Arts Program	(1) Strongly Agree	(2) Agree	(3) No Opinion	(4) Disagree	(5) Strongly Disagree
Life, Management, Career & Interpersonal skills					
• The ability to learn from experience	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to adapt to changing situations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to plan, organize, and manage time and resources	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to articulate and achieve goals	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to lead others and serve as role models	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to recognize your limitations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to assess risks and appropriately assume them	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to convey a professional presence, demeanor and attitude	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to understand and operate within your institutional culture	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A Context for Learning The Natural World					
• The ability to understand the biological, physical geographic and environmental context of society	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to appreciate how science provides methods for deciphering the natural world	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to comprehend technology as well as the language and methods of science	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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Please indicate with a check mark in the appropriate column your reaction to the following statements.

Liberal Arts Program	(1) Strongly Agree	(2) Agree	(3) No Opinion	(4) Disagree	(5) Strongly Disagree
• The ability to understand the impact of science and technology on our lives	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to make informed judgments in light of scientific evidence	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The Social & Cultural World					
• The ability to understand the social fabric of human society	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to analyze the interaction of race gender, class, age and culture	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to appreciate the role of the arts in society	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to identify the international dimensions of disciplines	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to accept the multiplicity of cultures in our nation and values of other cultures	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to function within the world of work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A Variety of Perspectives					
Historical					
• The ability to understand the historical context in which we lead our lives	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to search out and employ historical evidence in making judgments	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

PLEASE GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

Please indicate with a check mark in the appropriate column your reaction to the following statements.

Liberal Arts Program	(1) Strongly Agree	(2) Agree	(3) No Opinion	(4) Disagree	(5) Strongly Disagree
• The ability to analyze your personal history as a basis for future decisions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to comprehend the history of your major or professional field, as well as the central issues that led to its development	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ethical					
• The ability to recognize and handle conflict including complex moral dilemmas	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to balance individual rights and needs with the rights community	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to examine the consequences of and assume responsibility for your decisions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to use your education for the good society	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Esthetic					
• The ability to appreciate elegance in a wide variety of phenomena	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to recognize the emotional impact of visual and auditory impressions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to comprehend how esthetic considerations can shape decision-making	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to incorporate esthetic criteria into evaluation and judgment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to employ esthetic criteria to enhance personal and professional communication	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

PLEASE TURN PAGE OVER

Please indicate with a check mark in the appropriate column your reaction to the following statements.

Liberal Arts Program	(1) Strongly Agree	(2) Agree	(3) No Opinion	(4) Disagree	(5) Strongly Disagree
Personal					
• The ability to express an inner voice through written, oral and visual means	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to apply your own set of ethical guidelines	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to integrate your academic study work and life experiences	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to contribute actively to society through public service	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The relationship of Liberal Arts courses to your chosen profession					
Scope					
• The ability to connect between disciplines	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to interrelate the theoretical and the applied	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to connect your degree and the world of work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Substance					
• The ability to integrate general education with competence in your major	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to tie the individual to society	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The ability to extend college study into life long learning	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

PLEASE GO ON TO NEXT PAGE

Please indicate with a check mark in the appropriate column your reaction to the following statements.

FOR CLASSIFICATION PURPOSES, PLEASE ANSWER THE QUESTIONS BELOW

Your major upon graduation:

- ☐ **Economics Bachelor of Arts Degree**
- ☐ **Economics Bachelor of Science Degree with Certificate in Finance**
- ☐ **English Bachelor of Arts Degree**
- ☐ **English Bachelor of Science Degree**
- ☐ **Fine Arts Bachelor of Arts Degree**
- ☐ **Fine Arts Bachelor of Science Degree**
- ☐ **Political Science Bachelor of Arts Degree**
- ☐ **Psychology Bachelor of Arts Degree**
- ☐ **Sociology-Anthropology Bachelor of Arts Degree**
- ☐ **Technical Communication Bachelor of Science Degree**
- ☐ **Biotechnology Bachelor of Science Degree**
- ☐ **Graphic Design and Visual Communication Bachelor of Science Degree**
- ☐ **History Bachelor of Arts Degree**
- ☐ **History Bachelor of Science Degree**
- ☐ **Liberal Arts/Business Minor Bachelor of Science Degree**
- ☐ **Liberal Studies Bachelor of Arts Degree**
- ☐ **Political Science Bachelor of Science Degree**
- ☐ **Psychology Bachelor of Science Degree**
- ☐ **Sociology-Anthropology Bachelor of Science Degree**

THE END
THANK YOU